Dear Students

Welcome to AP US History! This is an elective course with a College Board mandated curriculum and a May AP exam date. As such, the workload is heavy and the pace fast.

In order to prepare for the year to come, you will have a summer reading assignment: These Truths: A History of the United States by Jill Lepore. The book is widely available in libraries (including as an ebook from LFPL), bookstores, and on Amazon and other online retailers. These Truths is a narrative history of the United States from Columbus's arrival through the election of 2016 and should help familiarize you with some of the basics of the story we will be discussing over the course of the year.

You may find it useful to read one or two reviews of the book before beginning:

The Guardian
https://www.theguardian.com/books/2019/jan/26/these-truths-review-jill-lepores-lincoln-us-history

Los Angeles Review of Books
https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/the-vanishing-indians-of-these-truths/#!

NPR
https://www.npr.org/2018/09/18/648736755/these-truths-looks-at-america-through-the-promises-of-its-beginning

National Review

New York Times
https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/14/books/review/jill-lepore-these-truths.html

Washington Post

In addition to reading the book, you will write a short essay in response to this prompt:

In the introduction to These Truths, Jill Lepore describes the three “self-evident” truths stated in the Declaration of Independence: “political equality, natural rights, and the sovereignty of the people” (xiv). She then asks, “Does American history prove these truths, or does it belie [contradict] them?” (xv).

Using one example from each of the four sections of the book as evidence, write a three-page essay that gives your answer to this question. Your essay should include specific passages from the book to support your analysis, and you should use standard in-text citation format to document your quotes.

We will discuss the book during the first days of class, and periodically throughout the year. Your essay is to be submitted to me via email, Google docs, or hard copy by noon on Monday, August 24 and will count as a graded exam for the class. Important note: We
will be going forward with regular class work before the essay is due, and you will have additional homework assignments and assessments before the essay due date. Plan accordingly!!

Please feel free to contact me at dpecknold@stfrancisschool.org if you have any questions or concerns. I will be in town most of the summer, and if enough of you are interested, I would be happy to have a few meetings to discuss the book in early August. If you would find such a meeting helpful, send me an email.

I look forward to teaching you next year.

Sincerely,
Diane Pecknold (Dr. P)